

U.S. Sailors Donate Essentials in Wake of Tsunami



Manama, Bahrain (Dec. 30, 2004) - Aid to victims of Tsunami. U.S. Navy photo by Mate 2nd Class Phillip A. Nickerson Jr.

By Journalist 2nd Class Jason Trevett, Commander U.S. 5th Fleet Public Affairs

MANAMA, Bahrain (NNS) - Sailors forward deployed to Naval Support Activity (NSA), Bahrain, supported a relief drive Dec. 29-30 for survivors of the massive tsunami that struck Southeast Asia early this week.

More than two tons of donations poured in from men and women in uniform, and from local nationals employed on the base. The aid consisted mostly of essentials: bottled water, food, clothes and toiletries.

The goods are to be transported to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, via truck where the cargo will then be flown to Colombo, Sri Lanka, for distribution to those in need.

"I donated some canned goods, some dry goods and cereal, stuff I know people can benefit from," said Information Systems Technician 2nd Class (SW) Ann-Marie Leach from Montego Bay, Jamaica. "From what I have seen on the news, my heart goes out to them because if I were in a situation like that, I would want some help too. So I think it is a great cause, and I would encourage everybody to try and get involved and participate in this relief effort because the human toll has been very high and people are going to need help for a long time."

"When you hear about the sheer devastation in these countries, and find out children are a large part of the victims, it is really a sad thing," said Cryptologic Technician Collection 1st Class (SW/AW) Bryan Hawkins from Port Arthur, Texas. "I brought in some clothes and some canned goods with flip-top lids so you can just pop them open and eat them right there if you had to."

Bahrain is approximately 2,300 miles from Sri Lanka's capital city. The air carrier DHL donated the space to fly the aid to Sri Lanka.

"One of the nice things about this effort is we were supported from all elements of the base from service members, to civilians, to third country nationals working here on the base," said Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) Special Agent Greg Harris from NCIS's Middle East field office. "The support has been excellent, and we want to say thank you to everyone who participated."

The Dec. 26 tsunami has so far claimed the lives of more than 20,000 people in Sri Lanka and there are still many more believed to be missing. Main coastal highways in the country have been rendered impassable making the relief effort more difficult.

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